

# **Governor's Workforce Investment Board Workforce System Committee**

**Adult Learning Center, Helena, Montana  
October 27, 2006**

## **MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present:** Robbe Lindsay, Chair; Thomas Curry; Julie Jordan; Joan Miles; and Alan Skari.

**Committee Members Absent:** Jody Messinger; Rodney Miller; and Teresa Wall-McDonald.

**Staff:** Leisa Smith; Mary Eve Pietrukowicz; and Chris Wilhelm.

**WIA Staff:** Pam Watson; Connie Kinsey; and Kathy Yankoff.

**Guests:** Wolfgang Ametsbichler; Mary Berg; Lynn Clark; Bruce Day; Leslie DeWitt; Suzanne Ferguson; Tom Frisby; Jasyn Harrington; Iva Highfill; Sheila Hogan; Rhonda Huseby; Debbie Krantz; Cherelee Martin; Stefanie McCarthie; Denise McGivern; Linda Moodry; Lisa Neuman; Jay Reardon; Connie Roope; Linda Shandy; Ginger Shepherd; Janet Snowberger; Kay Strayer; Joe Strelnik; Norma Vylasek.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Robbe Lindsay called the meeting to order at 8:22 a.m. and introduced SWIB Director Leisa Smith, who thanked the committee members, WIA staff and the public for being present. Chris Wilhelm conducted roll call and announced quorum was not yet established. Chairman Lindsay stated the meeting would proceed with non-action items on the agenda. Ms. Wilhelm conducted housekeeping and reviewed members' packets, mentioning WIA staff would be distributing additional documents throughout the day. She announced the meeting was being taped to assist with minute taking. The tapes will be destroyed once the minutes are approved. She said a catered lunch would be provided to Committee members.

Chairman Lindsay reviewed *Robert's Rules of Order* and requested, with a show of hands, members with a conflict of interest in any Request for Proposal (RFP) action item to indicate they would abstain from voting on that item. Thomas Curry stated he may have to abstain from his vote regarding the Dislocated Worker Program RFP process due to his position on the Board of the AFL-CIO.

### **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Request for Proposal (RFP) Process**

Pam Watson introduced WIA staff: Kathy Yankoff, who manages the Dislocated Worker and National Emergency Grant programs; and Connie Kinsey, who manages the WIA Adult and Youth programs. She reviewed documents that WIA staff was distributing, reviewed the history of the transition from local boards to a single statewide planning structure, and the selection of service providers. Montana requested the U.S. Department of Labor postpone the RFP process until this year because of the transition; providers' contracts were extended a year, to expire June 30, 2007. Ms. Watson stated the Youth Council met October 20, 2006, to discuss the RFP

process much like the Workforce System Committee was doing at the present meeting. The Committee's charge was to: decide on the process used to select service providers; define RFP criteria, and weight or scoring of said criteria. Under Montana code, RFP's must go through the state's Department of Administration's Procurement Division; their RFP boilerplate was provided. Ms. Kinsey reviewed the boilerplate's sections, highlighting section 2.3.5, the 70% *passing score* that offerors needed to achieve.

Ms. Watson reviewed the *Responsibilities in the Request for Proposal Process* and *The Request for Proposal Process* handouts, which delineated the roles of Department of Administration, Administrative Entity (WIA staff), SWIB Committee, the SWIB, SWIB Staff and Offerors; and the steps of the RFP process.

Ms. Watson also reviewed two funding flow charts for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. These flow charts showed the movement of federal funds granted the Governor. The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs have different funding streams and would need separate RFP's. WIA staff distributed two other handouts: a map showing WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Providers; and a contact sheet listing WIA Title 1B Adult Service Providers. Ms. Yankoff discussed the *WIA Title 1B Service Provider Selection Information Paper*. She stated within the previous local-based WIA structure, 10%-12% of funding was retained to cover administrative costs; with the current administrative entity, this has been reduced to approximately two percent.

The WIA law provides the State Workforce Investment Board with options in selecting service providers:

1. Select multiple local Adult and Dislocated Worker service providers through an open and competitive RFP process. Ms. Watson stated this is the current option used to fund Adult Program service providers, who submit proposals covering MACo Districts.
2. Take a Local Service Delivery Area approach that takes into consideration the state's BOS and CEP areas, with two sub-options:
  - an open and competitive RFP process, or
  - a direct funding grant in accordance with Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) 18-4-134 without a competitive process.
3. Select a single statewide Adult and Dislocated Worker provider, with staff presence in multiple communities across the state, with two sub-options:
  - an open and competitive RFP process, which currently is being used to select the Dislocated Worker provider; or
  - a direct funding grant in accordance with MCA 18-4-134 without a competitive process.

WIA staff researched best practices used by states similar to Montana's WIA structure: North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah and Idaho. Idaho, like Montana, moved to a single administrative entity in July, 2005. It held a competitive RFP for the Youth and Adult Programs, and designated the Department of Commerce and Labor as the single statewide provider for the Dislocated Worker Program.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

After the break, Chairman Lindsay welcomed Joan Miles to the meeting, and a quorum was established. Ms. Miles moved to approve the agenda as presented, Mr. Curry seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Miles inquired about proxy voting. She was advised the Boards Operating Rules do not allow for proxy voting.

### **Approval of June 8, 2006 Minutes**

Mr. Curry moved to approve the June 8, 2006 meeting minutes, Ms. Miles seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. Committee members were advised that the January 19, 2006 and March 9, 2006 minutes had not been approved yet. Staff missed placing them on this meeting's agenda and will ensure they are on the next agenda.

### **RFP Criteria and Evaluation Document**

WIA staff distributed the *Adult and Dislocated Worker RFP Criteria and Evaluation Documents*. Ms. Watson advised the Workforce System Committee work to amend/modify the full Adult program document, and then vote to accept the document as amended. Members can then follow the same process for the Dislocated Worker program.

Ms. Watson noted that the recommended criteria, individual elements, and scoring was similar (almost exact) for both programs, with only a couple minor differences specific to a program.

Mr. Curry asked whether the RFP would specifically address Native American reservations. Ms. Yankoff replied specific language could be interjected in the Required Criterion. Mr. Curry also pointed out the different weights of the two Required Criteria. Ms. Miles expressed a plan for coordination cannot be developed just from the offeror's end if other agencies are not willing to participate. Ms. Watson replied some of the coordination agreements may already be in place and can be submitted in offerors' proposals.

Ms. Yankoff explained the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) as noted in the RFP Required Criterion. WIA providers use standard tools, including the TABE as the single standardized assessment test.

Member of the public Mary Berg asked for clarification of two sections in the Required Criteria and Kathy Yankoff responded.

- a) *Description of how the offeror will deliver WIA Core, Intensive and Training services throughout the service area.*
- i) *Description of how the offeror will assess individuals to determine who will receive intensive services beyond informational core services...*

Mr. Curry suggested combining the two criteria in one sentence or in sequence. Ms. Miles suggested adding clarifying sub-categories. Ms. Yankoff stated that sub-category titles would be added for clarification.

Connie Roope of Career Training Institute stated that years ago she sat on the Governor's committee that determined how ITA's should be implemented. The current ITA's are much different. She requested clarification regarding how an offeror was to present an ITA plan. Ms. Yankoff replied service providers also had inquired about ITA's at the Technical Assistance Training held in Bozeman earlier in October 2006. Montana uses the ITA as a formality for money flowing from the provider to a client's training institution. The ITA is still an individual consultation.

Mr. Curry inquired about Rapid Response in the Dislocated Worker Program. Ms. Yankoff explained these funds are used for workers who are laid off or lose their jobs that staff learns about, regardless of the number of persons affected. Staff may go to the person to explain options or, in the case of a lay-off affecting larger numbers of individuals, set up informational workshops on site or at some other public location.

The Committee discussed the *RFP Scoring*. Mr. Curry requested more information regarding how the weights in the *RFP Evaluation Document* had been derived

Ms. Yankoff replied WIA staff used their knowledge and experience to make recommendations, and advised that the percent could be modified as necessary by the committee. Mr. Curry asked whether the RFP was weighted in favor of providers with an existing contract. Ms. Yankoff responded the weighting was not meant to favor current WIA service providers. Staff created the Specific Elements in terms general enough for providers new to WIA to express their experience. Mr. Bruce Day, REO, recommended adding language to include *innovation in services, demand-driven, or alternative service delivery*. Ms. Yankoff replied such language could be added. Ms. Roope replied it is good to see new service providers enter the field, but experienced operators should be given credit for applying annually while simultaneously conducting the work and successfully meeting performance measures. Chairman Lindsay asked how merit could be granted current operators for Required Criteria. Ms. Miles stated the RFP process needed to be open and competitive, and concurred with the 40% weight given the *Work Plan and Method* and 35% overall weight given the fiscal piece. Ms. Yankoff replied scoring levels can exist within the various Specific Elements of a Criterion. Ms. Watson added the Youth Council had recommended removing references to WIA to keep a level playing field. Ms. Miles preferred keeping this type of openness, saying an offeror's experience can be demonstrated in the proposal in other ways.

Ms. Watson stated the Committee needed to decide which optional criteria to include. She said members could limit the number of letters of support. Youth Council members had capped the number; this item will be scored as Pass/Fail. Ms. Miles agreed with the idea of a limit. Ms. Yankoff added an offeror could submit a single letter of support signed by several entities. SWIB Director Ms. Smith suggested offerors may want to submit letters representing each District they plan to serve.

Ms. Yankoff discussed the Optional Criterion and proposed scoring / weighting. Mr. Curry asked if an offeror could have community ties and not be part of a CMT. Ms. Yankoff responded that members of CMT's are very involved in their communities, and that although it is unlikely an offeror would not have a tie to their local CMT, it did not exclude them if the tie was not present.

Ms. Watson stated one Youth Council member requested commonly used acronyms be included as an attachment. Another method to address acronyms would be to not use acronyms. It was agreed these RFPs would not include an attachment of acronyms, and that acronyms would not be used in the RFP.

Members and WIA staff discussed optional process elements. Ms. Watson said negotiation between WIA staff and successful offerors scoring at least 70% would be possible to improve the proposal, and would occur as part of contract negotiations.

### **Committee Action - Method of Selecting Service Providers**

Mr. Curry moved the Committee maintain the current method for selecting Adult Program service providers: multiple local providers chosen through an open and competitive RFP process. Ms. Miles seconded. Multiple provider proposals will be allowed, as will single providers providing for multiple MACo Districts. Member of the public, Sheila Hogan, Career Training Institute, expressed appreciation that the Workforce System Committee recognized the strength of individual organizations. The motion to accept the current method for selecting Adult Program service providers passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Chairman Lindsay stated the Dislocated Worker program has been using an open and competitive RFP process to select a single statewide service provider, with staff presence in multiple communities across the state. He asked for committee and public comment on this. There was none. Ms. Miles moved to maintain this selection process for the Dislocated Worker program, and Julie Jordan seconded. The motion carried, with one abstention from Mr. Curry.

Mr. Curry moved to accept the *Adult RFP Criteria and Evaluation* as amended, with Ms. Jordan seconding. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Miles asked whether letters of support differ for a single statewide provider. Ms. Yankoff replied a single state provider would have to serve all 12 MACo Districts. Ms. Miles stated a cap of 15 letters or no cap might be appropriate because of the statewide nature of the provider. Ms. Miles moved to adopt the *Dislocated Worker RFP Criteria and Evaluation as amended*, Ms. Jordan seconded. Committee member Mr. Curry abstained from the vote, and the motion carried.

### **Designation of RFP Process Responsibilities**

Ms. Watson reiterated WIA staff would respond to offerors' questions via the Procurement Bureau's contracts officer. SWIB staff will establish the evaluation teams. Ms. Miles asked about the period of time that the awarded contracts covered. Ms. Watson responded the last award covered five years; Ms. Yankoff added the period would be a minimum of three years and up to five years. Chairman Lindsay asked for public comment. There was none.

### **Next Meeting and Agenda/Project Items**

SWIB Director Ms. Smith stated the next SWIB meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2006. Chairman Lindsay suggested scheduling the next Workforce System Committee meeting during that meeting.

### **Next Steps / RFP Timeline**

Ms. Watson discussed the next steps in the RFP process. The Committee's recommended changes would go to the SWIB for approval. Ms. Miles suggested a one-page summary of the Youth Council and Workforce System Committee deliberations be prepared for the SWIB. The tentative timeline will let the RFP's in January 2007, so that evaluators would have time to read and score the proposals. Ms. Smith stated some Youth Council members had expressed interest in being evaluators. Ms. Watson said Ms. Smith may be contacting Committee members in early March seeking volunteers to be evaluators. Selection of providers and contract negotiations will be conducted in a timely manner to ensure funding is available to providers by July 1, 2007.

### **Next Agenda**

Mr. Curry read from the June 8, 2006 Workforce System Committee meeting minutes and requested topics brought up then should comprise the Committee's next agenda.

Ms. Smith stated Jake Gustin, Manager of the Adult Learning Center where the present meeting was being held, was part of the Capitol Area Workforce System (CAWS) One-Stop campus, which also included the Helena Job Service and Career Training Institute nearby.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Curry moved to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Jordan seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.